

Journal! We certainly must congratulate the "house organ;" it has honesty enough to place decency before dollars.

Consistency is not one of the jewels which grace the crown of the *Medical Record*—that medical publication which is far too editorially dignified to take cognizance of the fact that it actually has advertising pages which exploit questionable nostrums. There are some very interesting things about some of the business practices of the *Medical Record*, but that is another story and one which will be written later. At the present time we merely wish to remark that the *Record* has at last discovered that Dr. Billings read a paper on the nostrum evil last July, at the Portland meeting of the A. M. A. Naturally, as the *Record* is one of the privately owned and "published-for-profit" journals, its business office does not take kindly to disparaging remarks concerning the things which pay it revenue, even if these remarks happen to be true. Therefore, the paper of Billings' must be torn to pieces and his words be made to seem foolish. Yet the editorial writers, ignorant though they be that such things as nostrum advertisements exist, are presumably educated physicians with at least some considerable knowledge of truth and honesty; therefore, the editorial condemnation was, we imagine, a difficult matter. Whether difficult or not, it was painfully inconsistent, for after attempting to show that the demand for a knowledge of the actual formula is absurd, and that Dr. Billings was and is rather childish and did not know what he was talking about when he urged that secret formula proprietaries are not only unscientific, but also dangerous, the *Record* winds up its Solonic editorial with the following gem:

"But we are convinced that Dr. Billings does not voice the general sentiment of the profession on this question. If the manufacturers were to publish their formulas—not only the ingredients, but the exact proportions of each—their preparations would undoubtedly find wider acceptance by scientific physicians. Many of these now refuse to use secret remedies, but they would prefer the more elegant preparations of the pharmaceutical chemists (were the ingredients known) to extemporaneous mixtures, whenever in their judgment they met the indications in the individual case."

Dr. Billings is to be congratulated; we do not remember to have read any more satisfactory editorial endorsement of his main contentions than that quoted from the *Record*.

Every physician must realize the danger of forming morphine or cocaine habit by frequent and unauthorized refilling of a prescription calling for these drugs; every pharmacist knows the difficulty of preventing refilling without losing a customer. Often, too, when the pharmacist is conscientious and refuses to refill such a prescription without the physician's

order, the patient, who may not have known that he was taking morphine or cocaine, becomes suspicious and then is annoyed because he has been given the drug, though he may have been in great need of it at the time the prescription was written. There seems to be only one satisfactory way out of the difficulty, and that is for the physician not to give the patient such a prescription, but to go to or telephone to the drug store and personally order the medicine required, and instruct the pharmacist to put no number on the label; then the patient cannot have the prescription refilled. This plan protects the patient from the danger of ignorantly developing a habit, and it also protects the pharmacist and the physician from the anger of the patient. We know of several physicians who always follow this plan, and it is to be highly commended to all.

The town of Selma, in our state, has an energetic health officer and a wide awake city council.

Dr. Steinwand recently recommended to the Board of Health that it recommend an ordinance prohibiting the distribution of free samples of nostrums, and the recommendation was promptly adopted. It is impossible to determine how many children die from the thoughtless taking of samples left on door steps, but certainly the number is not small. The two classes of nostrums most frequently distributed in this criminal manner are cathartics and headache powders or pills. Dr. Steinwand is to be congratulated, as also are the members of the Board of Health and the City Council of Selma. It would be an excellent thing if every community in the state took similar action.

"He's no good; he's a lodge doctor!" This was the comment made to a member of one of

our component societies by a patient who consulted him and was asked why he did not use the doctor of the lodge to which he belonged and whose services he could have had for nothing. It goes to show what the public, if properly educated in the real inwardness of the matter, think about lodge practice. It must be said, however, that this incident occurred in a community where there is an excellent county society and where the society and its individual members have been educating the public for some time. A correspondent in another part of the state has asked whether it would not be perfectly proper for a member of the society to accept the position of lodge physician, if the lodge, instead of paying a fixed pitance, paid him the regular fees for whatever work was actually done. This seems to be not only perfectly proper and ethical, but it offers about the only satisfactory solution of the lodge practice evil. In many counties of our state the local society is strong and more or less influential. We would respectfully recommend the careful consideration of the suggestion just given and that an effort be made to get the cooperation of

DANGEROUS PRESCRIPTIONS.

LODGE PRACTICE.